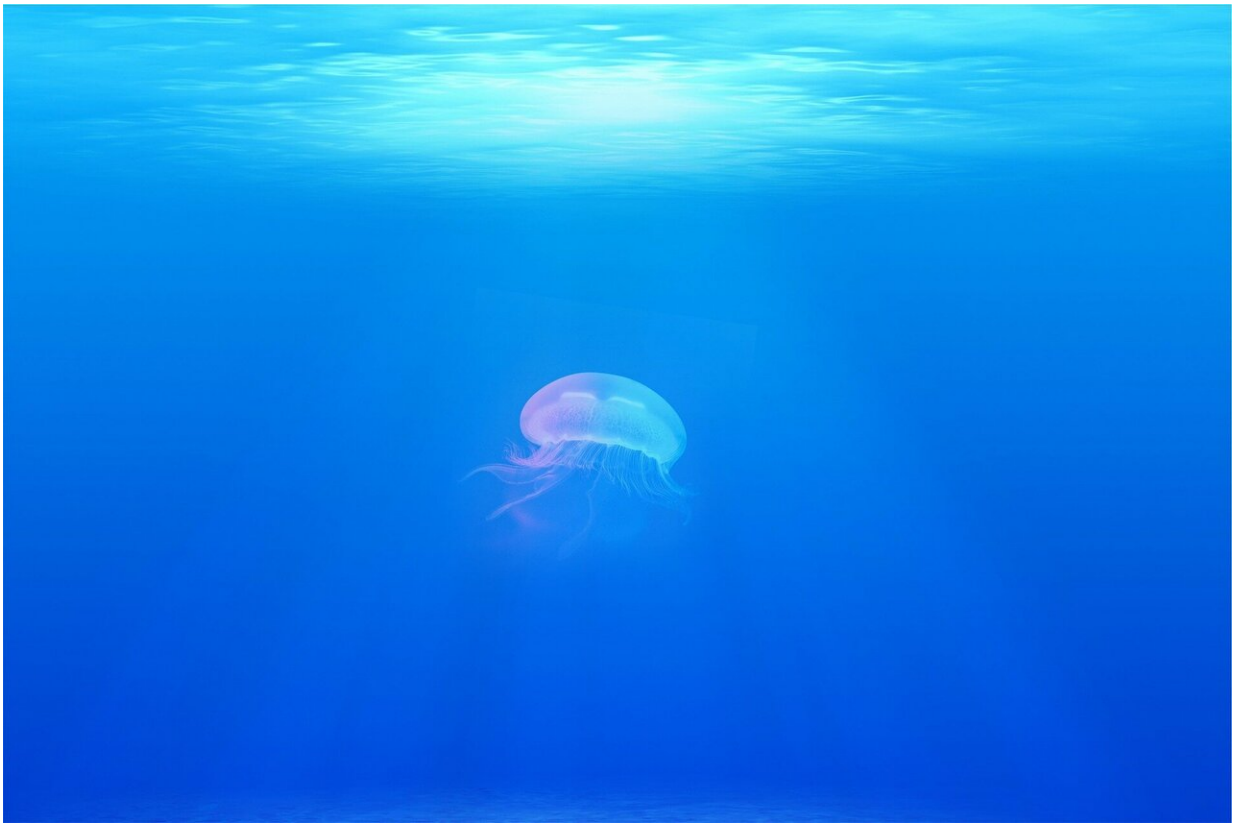


New UN report calls for urgent help for world's oceans

June 23 2021



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

A new United Nations report calls for an urgent change in the way the world's oceans are managed.

The report from the International Resource Panel, hosted by the UN Environment Program, raises concerns that if changes are not made quickly, the consequences will be dire.

The Governing Coastal Resources Report was launched today at an event addressed by Ambassador Peter Thomson, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean. It outlines the effect land-based human activities have on the [marine environment](#).

Put into context—80 per cent of marine and [coastal pollution](#) originates on land, but there are very few, if any, truly effective [governance](#) mechanisms that manage land-ocean interactions. The report provides [policy makers](#) with options to help reduce the effect of land-based activities on coastal resources and support a transition to a sustainable ocean-based economy.

"The report draws together an [evidence base](#) that demonstrates beyond question the need for enhanced governance coordination between terrestrial activities and [marine resources](#)," said Izabella Teixeira and Janez Potočnik, Co-Chairs of the International Resource Panel.

Lead author of the report—Steve Fletcher, Professor of Ocean Policy and Economy and Director of the Sustainability and the Environment research theme at the University of Portsmouth—said that "there is no doubt that the future of our oceans are at risk, and so is the critical role they play in supporting life on Earth and human wellbeing, as well as regulating the climate. This is a global issue in which isolated interventions will have [minimal impact](#). Systemic change is the key to success by bringing together countries, governments, business and communities to take collective action."

Professor Fletcher, who is also Director of the University's Revolution Plastics initiative, added that "we've got to stop looking at the problem in

a fragmented way—land-based activities in one country may contribute to degradation of coastal resources in another region. This should now be a global priority where the most impactful land-based activities are prioritized for urgent action and so generating the most benefit most quickly."

The report sends five key messages to world policy makers:

1. Living coastal resources are most threatened by land-based activities. Agriculture, ports and harbors and aquaculture are particularly impactful activities.
2. All parts of the blue economy are vulnerable to changes in coastal resources arising from land-based activities, particularly fishing, aquaculture and tourism.
3. Existing land-sea governance approaches cannot cope with the impacts on coastal resources created by land-based activities.
4. Land-sea governance urgently needs to be strengthened to protect coastal resources from the impacts of land-based activities and to support the transition to a sustainable blue economy.
5. Tackling the impacts of land-based activities on coastal resources is a global priority.

The report also provides policy makers with five options for strengthening existing land-sea governance structures:

1. Ecosystem-based management should be a guiding principle of coastal resource governance as it provides a holistic approach to the consideration of all influences on coastal resources.
2. Existing area-based management tools, with enhancement and adaptation, should be used to counteract the impacts of land-based activities on coastal resources.
3. Improved coordinating mechanisms are needed to overcome fragmented governance between sectors and between terrestrial

and marine governance arrangements.

4. Implementation-focused capacity development programs should be formulated and disseminated to target land-sea governance practitioners.
5. Filling evidence gaps, particularly related to the impacts of land-based activities on abiotic coastal resources, should be prioritized and their implications for effective governance determined.

More information: Report: [www.resourcepanel.org/sites/de ...
ll_report_-_2021.pdf](http://www.resourcepanel.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/Resource%20Panel%20-%202021.pdf)

Provided by University of Portsmouth

Citation: New UN report calls for urgent help for world's oceans (2021, June 23) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-06-urgent-world-oceans.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.